UNITED NATIONS **S**

Security Council

Distr.
GENERAL

S/1997/688
5 September 1997
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

LETTER DATED 5 SEPTEMBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the text of a statement by the National Assembly of the Republic of the Congo concerning the legal and military crisis that began on 5 June 1997 in Brazzaville.

I should be grateful if you would have this statement circulated as a Security Council document.

(Signed) Daniel ABIBI
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

97-23148 (E) 050997 050997

/...

Annex

Statement by the National Assembly concerning the legal and military crisis that began on 5 June 1997

In adopting the Constitution of 15 March 1992 by referendum and almost unanimously, the Congolese people had settled once and for all the question of devolution of power.

The preamble to the Constitution prohibits coups d'état as a means of acceding to power in the Republic of the Congo.

For a long time, coups d'état had been part of the political history of the Congo, representing the only means of acceding to power. They had therefore destroyed completely any hope of a truly democratic life.

National sovereignty belongs to the people through the ballot box. No group of individuals, and a fortiori no individual, may usurp it by other means.

In analysing the serious crisis that has befallen our country since 5 June 1997, in the wake of the failed coup d'état fomented by the Forces démocratiques unies (FDU) of Mr. Sassou-Nguesso, which has been transformed into a civil war, the National Assembly, meeting in extraordinary session on 4 September 1997, at the Palais du Parlement, vigorously condemned the coup d'état, which has brought about a crisis that seriously threatens the democratic process on which our country had embarked after the historic sovereign national conference.

This serious crisis has caused, inter alia:

- The indiscriminate killing of many people, most of them civilians;
- An unprecedented exodus of people fleeing Brazzaville and its environs, who have been given shelter in precarious conditions;
- Destruction of public and private buildings;
- Looting on an unprecedented scale, leading to the destruction of the socio-economic fabric.

The National Assembly pays tribute to the memory of the innocent victims of this crisis.

In the face of so much horror and suffering being experienced by the Congolese people, the National Assembly, as a product of the will of the people, deplores the guilty silence on the part of the Congolese political community, and the lack of reaction on the part of the international community in general and African States in particular.

The National Assembly notes the constant commitment by His Excellency the President of the Republic and head of State, Professor Pascal Lissouba, to restore peace, and urges him to persevere along that course.

It also notes the efforts being made by international and national mediators to find solutions to the crisis. In this connection, it congratulates His Excellency El Hadj Omar Bongo, President of the Gabonese Republic and Chairman of the International Mediation Committee, and Mr. Bernard Kolelas, parliamentary representative and Mayor of the city of Brazzaville and Chairman of the National Mediation Committee, on the work they have already done; it encourages them to continue that work.

The National Assembly reminds the nation and the world that, pursuant to article 149 of the Constitution of 15 March 1992, the decisions of the Constitutional Council are not subject to appeal. They are binding on public officials, all public authorities, the judiciary and private individuals.

Inasmuch as the decision of the Constitutional Council is consistent with the Constitution, and particularly as it is based on the principle set forth in article 67 and on the spirit of the Constitution as it relates to the transfer of power between the current President and his successor, the period of transition is perfectly lawful and constitutional. The argument that there is a so-called institutional impasse is therefore unjustifiable.

The National Assembly welcomes the establishment of the Espace républicain pour la défense de la démocratie et de l'unité nationale (ERDDUN), which has set as its main objectives the salvation of the Republic's institutions, the restoration of peace and the continuation of the electoral process.

The National Assembly congratulates the Congolese armed forces, which have remained faithful to the nation, on their determination in defending the Republic's institutions and the nation's territorial integrity.

The National Assembly commends the State media for the accuracy of the information they have disseminated concerning this crisis and for the efforts they are making to preserve national unity.

The National Assembly welcomes the initiative by the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, His Excellency Laurent Désiré Kabila, to establish an African peacekeeping force.

The National Assembly condemns past, present and future external interference in Congolese affairs on the part of the oil company ELF Congo, certain major Powers and certain neighbouring countries.

Lastly, the National Assembly calls for an end to hostilities, without conditions and without delay, so that the suffering of our people might be brought to a definitive end.

Long live democracy!

Long live the Republic!

Done at Brazzaville on 4 September 1997